

Remarks

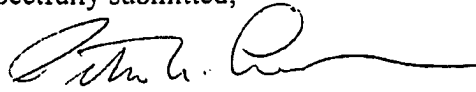
Applicant reconfirms his election to prosecute the claims of Group 1 in the present application. The specification has been amended to include the appropriate section headings which were inadvertently omitted in the preliminary amendment. Claims 1 through 25 have been canceled and new claims 26 through 32 are submitted herewith. The newly submitted claims relate to the invention of elected Group 1. Favorable consideration of the newly submitted claims respectfully is requested in view of the following comments.

Each of the newly submitted claims provides for a method comprising heating an aluminum coated steel blank to an austenization temperature, causing an increase in layer thickness of the blank, rapidly cooling the blank, allowing the heat treated blank to stand at room temperature for an interval of time, heating the cooled, heat treated blank a second time to an austenization temperature and then forming the blank while heated to produce the desired component. It is submitted that the patent to Takagi et al, principally relied upon in the rejection of Applicant's method claims, neither discloses nor teaches such claimed method. In particular, it is noted that the method disclosed in the Takagi et al patent does not provide for a first heat treating step, cooling and allowing the initially heat treated blank to stand and then applying a second heat treatment to the blank, as provided in the claimed method.

In view of the foregoing, it respectfully is requested that newly submitted claims 26 through 32 be allowed and further that the application be passed to issue.

Dated: March 23, 2008

Respectfully submitted,



Peter N. Los
Registration No.: 19,789
NOVAK DRUCE & QUIGG LLP
1300 I Street, NW
Suite 1000 West Tower
Washington, DC 20005
202-659-0100 telephone
202-659-0105 fax
Attorney for Applicant